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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 002747

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [KU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: GOK CONCERNED WITH TONE OF DISCUSSIONS OVER AIK FUEL FOR IRAQ

REF: A. BERNIS-TUELLER EMAIL 08/21/04

[B](#). 03 KUWAIT 5540

[C](#). KUWAIT 127

[D](#). KUWAIT 130

[E](#). KUWAIT 243

[F](#). KUWAIT 379

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Matthew H. Tueller, Reasons 1.4(a), (b) and (d)

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY. Following A/S Bloomfield and PDASD Flory's August 20 meeting in Washington with the Kuwaiti Charge concerning the GOK's decision to suspend assistance-in-kind (AIK) fuel for operations in Iraq effective September 4 in the absence of a formal contract, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Information Mohammed Abulhassan summoned CDA on August 23 to voice a number of concerns. First, Abulhassan objected to the implied threat that Kuwait's termination of free fuel for Iraq would harm the US-Kuwaiti relationship. Second, he took issue with the US side's "constant references" to Congress and the warning that the GOK's decision to stop supplying OIF fuel would lead Congress to believe that Kuwait had not helped with OIF. Third, the Minister was critical of the suggestion that Kuwait's major non-NATO ally (MNNA) status would be jeopardized by the fuel issue. CDA hoped the GOK would allow experts to work out a contract, but leave the price open for future discussions at the political level. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (C) Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Information Mohammed Abulhassan summoned CDA on August 23 to follow up on A/S Bloomfield and PDASD Flory's August 20 meeting with Kuwait's Charge d'Affaires Ahmad Razouqi. Abulhassan began by stressing that the US-Kuwait relationship is one that Kuwait values highly, and is strong enough to weather differences of opinion. He professed surprise that the U.S. had "hammered" Kuwaiti CDA Razouqi on the effect that Kuwait's proposed termination of free fuel for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) would have on the US-Kuwait bilateral relationship, which he said Kuwait has worked to strengthen for forty years.

[3](#). (C) Abulhassan said that the language used in the meeting "caused concern" within the Government of Kuwait (GOK), specifically in three areas. First was the implied threat that Kuwait's termination of free fuel for Iraq would harm the US-Kuwaiti relationship. (Later in the meeting, Abulhassan pointedly remarked that although Kuwait has seen little progress on access to or repatriation of its nationals detained at Guantanamo Bay -- an issue that he characterized as "very important" to Kuwait, and a source of constant tension between the government and the National Assembly -- Kuwait never threatened that it would affect the bilateral relationship with the US.)

[4](#). (C) Second, he took issue with the US side's "constant references" to Congress and the warning that the GOK's decision to stop supplying AIK fuel would lead Congress to believe that Kuwait had not helped with OIF. "We have given the whole of Kuwait for the liberation of Iraq while the entire Arab world was against us," Abulhassan stressed, "because we believe in your operation." He continued by saying that "every day, we demonstrate our commitment," citing present and future access to Kuwait's ports and airport. Within this broader context, Abulhassan said, the fuel dispute is a small matter. Furthermore, he complained, the reaction of Kuwait's National Assembly to the fuel deal had not been taken into consideration. He pointed out that the National Assembly had recently excoriated the government for Kuwait's comparatively small assistance package for Jordan, and warned that if the USG thought that the GOK could ignore the National Assembly, we would need to think again.

[5](#). (C) Third, the Minister objected to the suggestion that Kuwait's major non-NATO ally (MNNA) status would be jeopardized by the fuel issue, which he said was not even relevant to MNNA. The Minister openly wondered if the same "yardstick" was being used to measure other MNNA countries' cooperation.

[6](#). (C) CDA agreed that the OIF fuel issue should not affect the bilateral relationship; however, our mutual vital interests in Iraq could be badly affected if fuel was

interrupted. CDA hoped the GOK would allow experts to work out a contract, but leave the price open for future discussions at the political level. (Ambassador Khalid Al-Babtain, the head of MFA's Americas Desk, later said that he hoped the US would not leave a blank in the contract.) The Minister was not prepared to discuss the technical details, but stressed that the GOK oil sector is concerned with the "non-clarity" of the US position. He claimed that the US plans everything years in advance, and the GOK therefore could not understand why the US could not be specific about its fuel needs. For its part, he emphasized, the GOK could not go any further without planning and a contract.

17. (S) CDA asked that a clear distinction be made between fuel for forces in Iraq and fuel to be used by U.S. forces in Kuwait under the Defense Cooperative Agreement (DCA). Abulhassan confirmed that this distinction was clear. The Minister said that the GOK has analyzed the DCA, and found that it does not/not support the provision of fuel for Iraq. For this reason, he added, the GOK needed to enter into a separate agreement with the US so that they could continue supplying fuel for use in Iraq. The Minister then inquired about agreements that neighboring countries (Qatar specifically) had with the US to provide fuel for Iraq operations. CDA replied that he believed Kuwait was the main supplier.

18. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
TUELLER